



Carrots Fact Sheet



Where did they come from?

Carrots were first cultivated in Afghanistan more than 2000 years ago. During 900-1000 A.D. purple and yellow carrots were brought from Afghanistan to the Mediterranean. In the 1300's purple and yellow carrots were grown in Western Europe and China. In the 1700's orange carrots were first reported in the Netherlands. Today, the typical orange carrots available throughout the United States are descendants of Dutch-bred carrots. Other carrot varieties include white carrots that are used in western and Eastern Europe for livestock, red carrots grown in Japan and yellow and purple carrots that are available in the Mideast, Turkey, India and China.

Where do they grow?

The majority of carrots grown for United States are produced in California, Wisconsin, Michigan and Washington. California produces about 60 percent of the entire United States carrot crop. Carrots are shipped nationwide and are available all year long.

How do they grow?

Carrots are taproots, which is a type of root that grows downwards into the soil. Carrots are grown from seeds, which take 6 to 21 days to germinate and 70 to 100 days to mature fully. When you eat a carrot you are actually eating the root! The feathery green leaves that are on top of the root grow above the soil. Once carrots are grown and mature, machines mechanically harvest them. They pull carrots up by their tops and shake off the dirt. The machines also cut the tops off. Carrots grow best in cool seasons where young seedlings can withstand mild frosts, however high temperatures can significantly damage them.

Are they healthy?

- ✎ Excellent source of beta-carotene (vitamin A) which keeps our eyes healthy
- ✎ Contains the fiber, calcium pectate, which may lower cholesterol

How do you pick a good one?

- ✎ Choose those which are smooth, firm and well shaped
- ✎ The carrot should not be covered with hair like roots
- ✎ It should be a bright orange to orange-red in color
- ✎ Avoid carrots that are cracked, shriveled, soft or wilted
- ✎ Carrots with smaller cores (*the core is the fibrous center that runs the length of this vegetable*) are sweeter. Since you can't see the core till you cut it open, look for carrots that are smaller or thinner at the top. This usually indicates a smaller core. The natural sugars of the carrots are in the outer layers; therefore, a smaller core will mean more outer layers of sweetness.

☺ FUN FACTS! ☺

Carrots

Did you know...

- ☺ Did you know one handful of mini peeled carrots or one medium fresh carrot counts as one serving of your 5 A Day?
- ☺ Did you know carrots come in many sizes and shapes: round, cylindrical, fat, very small, long or thin?
- ☺ Did you know that carrots are crunchy?
- ☺ Did you know carrots contain more sugar than any other vegetable, except for the beet?
- ☺ Did you know carrots are members of the parsley family?
(Their feathery green leaves look somewhat like parsley. Other members of this family are celery, parsnips, dill, fennel and the wildflower called Queen Anne's Lace.)
- ☺ Did you know baby carrots or mini-peeled carrots are grown from “caropak” carrots?
(“Caropak” carrots are a different seed variety that grows slender carrots. They grow close together to keep their small size. These are what are primarily available in the supermarkets as baby carrots. True “baby” carrots would actually be carrots that have been removed from the ground early and look like miniature carrots. These are rarely available.)
- ☺ Did you know carrots provide 30% of the vitamin A in American diets?

Remember ...

Include 5 - 9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day!



School Food Service Link.....

Quick Steps to 5 - 9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day at school...

Listed below are suggestions that you may choose at your own discretion

DOD (Department of Defense) Special:

- ✓ Mini bags of baby carrots are available from DOD for approximately .10 cents per bag!
- ✓ Call Leslie Bowen to place orders: 1-800-795-3523
- ✓ An assortment of fresh and pre-cut fresh produce is available from DOD at economical prices

RECIPES:

- ✓ Try a new recipe with carrots ----- Carrot Cake (USDA C-5)
Carrot-Raisin Salad (USDA E-4) Orange Glazed Carrots (USDA I-13a)
Minestrone Soup (USDA H-7) or Thick Vegetable Soup (USDA H-5)
- ✓ Mix into fresh green or spinach salads
- ✓ Offer raw carrots with low fat ranch dressing for lunch or After School Snack
- ✓ Add finely chopped carrots to bread stuffing/dressing for Thanksgiving
- ✓ Add to chicken, tuna or pasta salads
- ✓ Sell mini bags of baby carrots as a healthy a la carte snack

MARKETING:

- ✓ Hang up posters from your "Fruits & Vegetables Galore" Kit
*Sense-ational Food; Eat Your Colors Every Day/Tuba Player;
Eat Your Colors Today; Enjoy Fruits & Vegetables!*
- ✓ Advertise and highlight the fruit or vegetable of the month on your menu
- ✓ Refer to "Fruits & Vegetables Galore" Kit (*Meal Appeal Manual*) page 9

PROMOTIONS:

- ✓ Promote a "Sticker Day" with prizes on featured fruit/vegetable menu day;
Give this menu a special name (*Examples: Chill Out with Carrots! Crazy for Carrots!*)
- ✓ Advertise a different carrot recipe on your menu each week in November
- ✓ Feature carrots on your Thanksgiving holiday menu
- ✓ Feature "Orange Day" on the day that you offer carrots on your menu
 - ✓ Encourage the entire school to get involved
 - ✓ Reward students with a small prize if they are wearing orange
- ✓ Turn your salad bar into a self-serve fruit and vegetable bar once/week or once/month
 - ✓ Select produce in season
 - ✓ Utilize commodity frozen and canned fruits and vegetables and dried fruits
- ✓ Refer to "Fruits & Vegetables Galore" Kit (*Meal Appeal Manual*) pages 16-31

Presentation

Meal Appeal ----- Clump Similar

Colors in Packaged Salads for Eye Appeal:

Place Shredded or Diced Carrots in Corner
of Prepackaged Salad Container;
In Opposite Corner Place
Diced Tomatoes

Quality:

Do Not Store Carrots
Near Ethylene Gas
Producing Produce
Such as Apples, Cantaloupes,
Pears & Tomatoes ---
Gas Will Make
Carrots Bitter!

Safety:

Maintain Temperature of
Cold Food at 40° F
or Below



School Food Service Link.....



School Food Service Recipes



Fresh Carrot Soup

Recipe From: California Fresh Carrot Advisory Board

Yield: 2 Gallons

Ingredients:

- 5 lbs. Fresh Carrots, Sliced
- ½ lb. Onions, Chopped
- ½ lb. Celery, Sliced
- 2 ½ gallons Stock or Water
- ¼ cup Lemon Juice
- 1 Tablespoon Salt (Optional)
- ½ Tablespoon Pepper

Directions:

1. Combine carrots, onions, celery and stock.
2. Simmer for 1 hour.
3. puree soup